rejuvenation/consolidation of coffee areas to the tune of 3,000 ha. during the Ninth Plan.

(b) There is no shortage of coffee in the country.

(c) and (d) Coffee Board has already identified suitable areas for coffee cultivation in Andhra pradesh and around 10,000 hac. of area has been brought under coffee till date. The Board has set up necessary infrastructure to support research, extension and developmental activities for coffee in Andhra Pradesh.

व्यापार घाटे में वृद्धि

1230. **श्री रामजीलाल:** क्या **वाणिज्य** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि भारत का विदेश व्यापार घाटा पिछले वर्ष की तुलना में 1997-98 के दौरान काफी बढ़ गया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो कुल व्यापार घाटा कितने का है, और इसके क्या कारण हैं; और

(ग) सरकार द्वारा व्यापार घाटा कम करने के लिए अब तक क्या कदम उठाए गए हैं तथा उनके परिणाम कब तक सामने आने की सम्भावना है?

वाणिज्य मंत्री (श्री राम कृष्ण हेगड़े): (क) से (ग) वाणिज्यिक जानकारी एवं सांख्यिकी महानिदेशालय (डी जी सी आई एण्ड एस) से प्राप्त अनन्तिम आंकड़ों के अनुसार रुपये के रूप में तथा डालर के रूप में वर्ष 1997-98 के लिए व्यापार घाटा निम्नानुसार है:—

वर्ष	मूल्य	
	यूएस डालर मिलियन	करोड़ रु०
1997-98	6799	25268

व्यापार घाटे को निर्यात की तुलना में अधिक आयात से मापा जाता है। व्यापार घाटे में वृद्धि पूंजीगत वस्तुओं, कच्चे माल तथा मध्यवर्ती वस्तुओं के अलावा मुख्य रूप से उर्वरकों के आयात से हुई है। इनकी आवश्यकता औद्योगिक उत्पादन और निर्यातों को बढ़ाने के लिए थी, जो कि गतिशील अर्थव्यवस्था की एक मूल विशेषता है। व्यापार घाटे को कम करने का मूल सिद्धांत निरन्तर निर्यात वृद्धि में निहित है। इसे प्राप्त करने के लिए देश की निर्यात वृद्धि को बढ़ाने के लिए सरकार द्वारा निरन्तर निर्यात संवर्धन उपाय किए जा रहे हैं। इनमें शामिल है निर्यात अनुकूल वातावरण उपलब्ध कराने के लिए नीति उदारीकरण तथा प्रक्रियाओं का सरलीकरण। निर्यात संवर्धन उपाय, व्यापार, उद्योग और सरकार द्वारा स्थापित निर्यात संवर्धन संगठनों के साथ लगातार बातचीत के आधार पर प्रारम्भ किए गए हैं।

Setting up of a National Export Council

1231. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Confederation of Indian Industry has called for setting up of an apex National Export Council to develop a country specific strategy; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to renew the thrust on exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has initiated a number of policy initiatives to boost exports. The external trade sector of India has been further liberalised with the changes introduced in the new Exim Policy. The existing export incentive schemes have been strengthened while an effort is being made to evolve new strategies for accelerated growth of exports. Procedures are constantly being simplified and sector specific issues are being addressed vigorously to deal with sectoral constraints.

Suggestions by CII to Boost Exports.

1232. SHRI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the suggestions made by the Confederation of Indian Industry to boost exports; and

(b) the measures proposed to boost at least 15% growth in exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The suggestions made by Confederation of Indian Industry to boost exports include-setting up an apex National body to develop a country strategy; greater freedom and autonomy to the Exim Bank; revamping of the ECGC and building of India brand.

(b) Export performance is influenced inter-alia by international market conditions, supporting infrastructural facilities, credit availability and policy framework and the Government is taking all necessary steps to see that there is a steady increase in the growth of exports. Export promotion is a continuous process and measures are being taken based on interaction with trade, industry and export promotion organisations.

Trade Barriers by Industrialised Countries

1233. SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether at the second ministerial meeting of WTO at Geneva held in May, 1998 India raised objections to the unilateral imposition of trade barriers by industrialised countries on environmental, labour, health and Psytosanitary standars; and

(b) if so, whether India received support from other developing countries in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. At the second Ministerial meeting concern was expressed at the trend towards unilateral imposition of trade barriers by certain industrialized countries on inter alia grounds such as environmental, labour, health and Phytosanitary standards. It was pointed out that protectionist measures adopted by developed countries in various ways restrict market access for goods and services produced in developing countries.

During the deliberations, attempts by certain developed countries to introduce potentially protectionist issues, based on environmental considerations, were strongly resisted by India and other developing countries. The developing countries were of the view that economic growth should be given primacy in order to improve standards of living in poorer countries. Other developing countries also joined India in demanding that the industrialised countries should not resort to new protectionism, exploiting the problems encountered by certain developing countries in the wake of the financial crisis. This position has also been endorsed by the Conference which has recognized that 'keeping all markets open must be a key element in a durable solution to these difficulties' and that the 'use of any protectionist measures' is to be rejected.

Setting up of a WTO Centre by Lift

1234. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that LIFT is proposing to set up a WTO Centre in order to study various aspects of the new international trade regime and establish a data base on latest trends;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) by when the Centre is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposed WTO Centre would be headed by an eminent expert in the field of international trade. The expenditure on this centre would be met out of the specific grants provided by the Government and the interest earned on corpus fund devoted to the LIFT by MMTC and PEC etc. The activities of the centre would be as follows:-

(i) To conduct research on specific policy related issues assigned by MOC from time to time.